

REPORT

OF

COMMISSION ON PRISON
LABOR

TO THE

LEGISLATURE

STATE OF IDAHO

TWELFTH SESSION


COMMISSION

JOHN W. SNOOK, Chairman

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Report of Commission on Prison Labor.

To the Legislature of the State of Idaho, Twelfth Session:

We, the undersigned, your Commission on Prison Labor, in accordance with Chapter 220 of the Session Laws of the State of Idaho, Eleventh Session, beg leave to report as follows:

The employment of prisoners in this state is a very important problem, and one vitally connected with the successful management of the penitentiary. There are at present several systems of prison labor in practice in the United States. The three most widely adopted are the Contract System, the State Account System and the State Use System. Under the first, known as the Contract System, the state provides the convict labor at a specified price per day to the contractor who furnishes the material, machinery and instructions, keeps the convicts steadily employed and takes the manufactured product, the state having no further responsibility than providing officers to maintain order and discipline and shop room for the employment of the convicts. Another form of the Contract System is the piece price system, under which the contractor providing the material takes the product so manufactured and pays the state so much per piece for it. This is the system that is now in use in the South Dakota Penitentiary at Sioux Falls, where they have a contract with a shirt company whereby the company furnishes all material and pays the state so much per dozen for the manufacture. The shirt company also furnishes the penitentiary with the sum of one hundred twenty-five dollars per month as salary for the superintendent who is employed by and subject to the direction of the State Board of Charities and Correction of the State of South Dakota, who have charge of the penitentiary. This method nets the state from fifty to sixty cents a day per prisoner.

Under the second system, known as the State Account System, the state provides the material, machinery, and means for the entire management of the business, disposing of the manufactured product on the market, the state being benefitted by the profit that the business may produce, and

responsible for any loss that may be sustained, the same as any outside business or corporation.

The third system, known as the State Use System, provides that the prisoners shall all be employed by the state on its own account and that no article shall be manufactured except such as may be used in other state or municipal institutions. This is the system in vogue in the State of New York, where it has come nearer to making a success than in any other state because of the dense population of the state and the large number of state institutions. However, we are of the opinion that the population of this state is entirely too small, and state institutions too few to make this system practicable here, as, excepting in densely populated states, it would not prove of advantage to the taxpayers or the convict.

The Chairman and Secretary of this Committee visited the following institutions with a view to ascertaining the various methods adopted for the employment of prison labor :

We first attended the National Prison Congress held in Omaha, Nebraska, and on our return visited the Federal Penitentiary at Fort Leavenworth. At Leavenworth, the prisoners are being employed in the manufacture of brick and in the construction of buildings. We next visited the Kansas State Penitentiary at Lansing. Here a large percentage of their prisoners are engaged in coal mining, as the state owns a large coal mine directly underneath the penitentiary, the entrance to the mine being inside the prison enclosure. They also have a twine factory in operation in which binding twine is manufactured. This industry has been an unqualified success in Kansas, so we were informed by the warden, chiefly because of the method of disposing of the twine, the Kansas plan being to sell direct to the dealers, thus placing the twine in easy reach of the farmers at prices considerably below the price of the trust article thereby making the dealers their friends instead of enemies. This method of disposing of the twine product was so successful that they furnished twine to the trade in ninety out of the one hundred and five counties in the state, and rejected orders to the amount of three hundred fifty thousand pounds outside of the state which they were unable to fill.

In Colorado, the prisoners are used in the construction of roads. At the time we visited the Colorado Penitentiary

about fifty prisoners were engaged in the making of roads about thirty-five miles from the penitentiary under the direction of an overseer and one assistant, the laws of Colorado providing that convicts of the state penitentiary undergoing sentence in accordance with law who shall or may be engaged in work connected with said penitentiary outside the walls of said institution and known as trusty prisoners, and who shall be employed on the ranches and in the gardens, lime kilns or quarries or any other class of work without the walls of said prison, and who shall conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of said prison and perform their work in a creditable manner, may, upon approval of the warden, be granted such good time in addition to that allowed by law as the Board of Penitentiary Commissioners may order, not to exceed ten days in any one calendar month. This granting of additional good time is not to be construed as affecting any so-called trusty prisoner who shall, at any time, be engaged in the regular prison duties while confined within the walls of the penitentiary. The prisoners at this time were employed on the road from Canyon City to Colorado Springs, which road has since been completed, the state furnishing the men and teams, the different counties through which the road passess furnishing all supplies used by the prisoners and feed for the teams. This system has proven very profitable in Colorado as they have a prison population of eight hundred, and as about twenty per cent of the prisoners of most penitentiaries can be employed in road work with comparative safety.

In Utah, where we visited the penitentiary, the prisoners are employed in road work and they have a sock factory in which a number of prisoners are furnished with employment, which is run on a State Account System, the manufactured product being disposed of on the market, the state being benefited by any profits that the business may produce.

In the Chicago House of Correction, one of their industries is a printing establishment, in which printing is done for the City of Chicago, which city maintains the Chicago House of Correction. Their printing consists of reports of officials, boards and institutions, books of law, rules and instructions, letter heads, bill heads, statements, etc.

The penitentiary at Sing Sing, also has a printing plant in which ruled and printed books including ledgers, journals, sales, cash, time, receipt and check books, special ruled and

bound books of every description, ruled and printed blanks put up in pads or books, padded, numbered, perforated, etc., stationery of every description, letter heads, bill heads, statements, reports, tags, envelopes, blank forms, requisitions, checks, drafts, etc., reports of officials, rules and instructions, reports of boards and institutions, books of laws, half tone and colored printing for catalogues, booklets, folders, etc. In their carpentering department, they manufacture office desks, dining room chairs and stools, filing devices, dressers, bureaus, chiffoniers and wardrobes, school and assembly room desks and furniture, hall and lawn settees, step-ladders, etc. This is conducted under the State Use System. Under this system, all articles that are manufactured and not required for use in the penitentiary at Sing Sing, are furnished the state or any political division thereof, or for or to any public institution owned or managed and controlled by the state or any political division thereof, and for such prices as are fixed and determined by the Board of Managers thereof.

The State Penitentiary at Walla Walla, Washington, which was visited by all the members of the committee, have in operation a jute mill wherein sacks are manufactured, which nets the state approximately thirty-five thousand dollars a year and furnishes employment for all prisoners in the institution who are not employed at other labor in connection with the institution. This has proven a very useful and profitable method of employing prisoners in the Washington Penitentiary. The cost of installing machinery and the construction of a building for a jute mill at our penitentiary would entail an expense of about seventy-five thousand dollars for a fifty loom mill, which would furnish employment for all prisoners in the penitentiary not used for other purposes, but on account of the uncertainty of the tariff on burlap, we hesitate to recommend the establishment of a jute mill, but the State Penitentiary at Walla Walla has another method of employment for a number of their prisoners which appeals to us, and is carried on under the State Account System, whereby articles used in the various other institutions of the state are made at the penitentiary. The following tables show the result of this system in the tailoring department wherein forty-five prisoners were employed for the biennial period from October 1, 1910 to September 30, 1912:

TAILOR SHOP BIENNIAL REPORT

SHOWING CLOTHING MANUFACTURED AND REPAIRED, AND ALSO AMOUNT SAVED BY CONVICTS' LABOR FROM OCTOBER 1ST, 1910, TO SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1912.

MANUFACTURED

Number of prisoners employed in Tailor Shop, 45.

NAME OF INSTITUTION		Cost of Goods	Cost of Labor	Value Per Garment	Total Value of Goods	Total Value of Labor	Total Value of Garments	Total for each Institution	Saving on Convict Labor
Western Hospital Inmates' Clothing									
1162 Coats	@	\$ 2.55	\$ 2.50	\$ 5.05	\$ 3,014.10	\$ 2,955.00	\$ 5,969.10		
1224 Pants	@	1.95	1.50	3.45	2,385.80	1,836.00	4,221.80		
1144 Vests	@	1.15	1.00	2.15	1,306.60	1,144.00	2,450.60	\$ 12,641.50	\$ 5,935.00
Eastern Hospital Inmates' Clothing									
481 Coats	@	\$ 2.55	\$ 2.50	\$ 5.05	\$ 1,226.55	\$ 1,202.50	\$ 2,429.05		
566 Pants	@	1.95	1.50	3.45	1,103.70	849.00	1,952.70		
464 Vests	@	1.15	1.00	2.15	533.60	464.00	997.60	5,379.35	2,515.50
Eastern Hospital Employees' Uni- forms, Khaki									
162 Coats	@	\$.45	\$.50	\$.95	\$ 72.90	\$ 81.00	\$ 153.90		
162 Pants	@	.55	.50	1.05	89.10	81.00	170.10	324.00	162.00
State Soldiers' Home Inmates' Clothing									
155 Coats	@	\$ 4.25	\$ 2.50	\$ 6.75	\$ 658.75	\$ 387.50	\$ 1,046.25		
161 Pants	@	2.25	1.50	3.75	362.25	241.50	603.75		
162 Vests	@	1.75	1.00	2.75	283.50	162.00	445.50	2,095.50	791.00
Total of amount manufactured forwarded.....									\$ 20,440.35
									\$ 9,403.50

TAILOR SHOP BIENNIAL REPORT

SHOWING CLOTHING MANUFACTURED AND REPAIRED, AND ALSO AMOUNT SAVED BY CONVICTS' LABOR FROM OCTOBER 1ST, 1910, TO SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1912.—CONTINUED.

MANUFACTURED FOR	Cost of Goods	Cost of Labor	Value per Garment	Total Value of Goods	Total Value of Labor	Total Value of Garments	Total Manufactured	Saving on Convict Labor
Totals brought forward.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$ 20,440.35	\$ 9,403.50
Discharged Convicts								
442 Coats@	\$ 2.55	\$ 2.50	\$ 5.05	\$ 1,127.10	\$ 1,105.00	\$ 2,232.10		
493 Pants@	1.95	1.50	3.45	961.35	739.50	1,700.85		
474 Vests@	1.15	1.00	2.15	545.10	474.00	1,019.10	4,952.05	2,318.50
Guards' Uniforms, W. S. P.								
43 Coats@	\$ 7.00	\$ 3.50	\$10.50	\$ 301.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 451.50		
72 Pants@	5.00	2.25	7.25	360.00	162.00	522.00		
22 Vests@	2.00	2.00	4.00	44.00	44.00	88.00	1,061.50	356.50
Convicts' Regulation Clothing								
807 Coats (blue wool).....@	\$ 2.00	\$.50	\$ 2.50	\$ 1,614.00	\$ 403.50	\$ 2,017.50		
1623 Pants (blue wool).....@	1.65	.30	1.95	2,677.95	486.90	3,164.85		
1358 Shirts (blue wool).....@	1.50	.20	1.70	2,037.00	271.60	2,308.60		
2 Vests (blue wool).....@	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.00		
1336 Caps (blue wool).....@	.15	.08	.23	200.40	106.88	307.28		
47 Coats (red str.).....@	2.25	.50	2.75	105.75	23.50	129.25		
62 Pants (red str.).....@	1.75	.30	2.05	108.50	18.60	127.10		
75 Shirts (red str.).....@	1.75	.20	1.95	131.25	15.00	146.25		
40 Caps (red str).....@	.15	.08	.23	6.00	3.20	9.20		
Totals of amount manufactured forwarded.....					\$ 1,331.18	\$ 8,214.03	\$ 26,453.90	\$12,078.50

TAILOR SHOP BIENNIAL REPORT

SHOWING CLOTHING MANUFACTURED AND REPAIRED, AND ALSO AMOUNT SAVED BY CONVICTS' LABOR FROM OCTOBER 1ST, 1910, TO SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1912.—CONTINUED.

MANUFACTURED FOR	Cost of Goods	Cost of Labor	Value per Garment	Total Value of Goods	Total Value of Labor	Total Value of Garments	Total Manufac- tured	Saving on Convict Labor
Totals brought forward.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$ 1,331.18	\$ 8,214.03	\$ 26,453.90	\$12,078.50
Convicts' Regulation Clothing								
668 Jumpers (B. D.)...@	\$.60	\$.20	\$.80	\$ 400.80	133.60	534.40		
1187 Pants (B. D.)...@	.50	.30	.80	593.50	356.10	949.60		
543 Overalls (B. D.)...@	.55	.30	.85	298.65	162.90	461.55		
169 Bib Overalls (B. D.)								
D.) .....	.75	.45	1.20	126.75	76.05	202.80		
1766 Hickory Shirts....@	.50	.20	.70	903.00	353.20	1,256.20		
2316 Undershirts .....	.40	.15	.55	926.40	347.40	1,273.80		
2553 Drawers .....	.40	.15	.55	1,021.20	382.95	1,404.15	14,296.53	3,143.38
Miscellaneous								
827 Bed Sheets (Con.)@	.28	.01	.29	\$ 231.56	\$ 8.27	\$ 239.83		
81 Bed Sheets (Off).@	.55	.01	.56	44.55	.81	45.36		
1219 Pillow Slips.....@	.15	.02	.17	182.85	24.38	207.23		
1890 Face Towels (Con.)								
.....@	.06	.01	.07	113.40	18.90	132.30		
239 Roller Towels								
(Con.) .....	.18	.01	.19	43.02	2.39	45.41		
22 Roller Towels								
(Off) .....	.25	.01	.26	5.50	.22	5.72		
464 Towels (Barber).@	.04	.01	.05	18.56	4.64	23.20		
270 Bed Ticks .....	.70	.15	.85	189.00	40.50	229.50		
2350 Handkerchiefs ...@	.015/8	.01 1/2	.02 1/8	38.19	35.25	73.44		
160 White Coats.....@	.40	.50	.90	64.00	80.00	144.00		
24 Friction Pads.....@	.75	.15	.90	18.00	3.60	21.60		
60 Carpenters' Aprons								
.....@	.10	.10	.20	6.00	6.00	12.00		
24 Bib Aprons								
(White) .....	.25	.05	.30	4.80	1.20	6.00		
24 Small Aprons								
(White) .....	.15	.03	.18	3.60	.72	4.32		
Total of amount manufactured forwarded.....					\$ 226.88	\$ 1,189.91	\$ 40,750.43	\$15,221.88

TAILOR SHOP BIENNIAL REPORT

SHOWING CLOTHING MANUFACTURED AND REPAIRED, ALSO AMOUNT SAVED BY CONVICTS' LABOR
 FROM OCTOBER 1ST, 1910 TO SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1912.—CONTINUED.

MANUFACTURED FOR	Cost of Goods	Cost of Labor	Value per Garment	Total Value of Goods	Total Value of Labor	Total Value of Garments	Total Manufac- tured	Saving on Convict Labor
Totals brought forward.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$ 226.88	\$ 1,189.91	\$ 40,750.43	\$15,221.88
Miscellaneous (Continued) .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
454 Flour Sack Aprons.....@	\$.00	\$.05	\$.05	.....	22.70	22.70	.....	.....
29 Coffee Sacks .....	.00	.05	.05	.....	1.45	1.45	.....	.....
914 Mitts .....	.00	.05	.05	.....	45.70	45.70	.....	.....
1289 Finger Stalls .....	.00	.01	.01	.....	12.89	12.89	.....	.....
20 Milk Strainers .....	.00	.05	.05	.....	1.00	1.00	.....	.....
68 White Caps .....	.10	.05	.15	6.80	3.40	10.20	.....	.....
3 Barbers' Aprons .....	.15	.05	.20	.45	.15	.60	.....	.....
25 Table Covers .....	.20	.05	.25	5.00	1.25	6.25	.....	.....
7 Bread Box Covers.....@	.10	.05	.15	.70	.35	1.05	.....	.....
12 Storeroom Covers .....	.20	.05	.25	2.40	.60	3.00	.....	.....
2 Dish Covers .....	.05	.01	.06	.10	.02	.12	.....	.....
2 Curtains .....	.20	.05	.25	.40	.10	.50	1,295.37	316.49
Total of amount manufactured and also saving on convict labor .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	\$ 42,045.80	\$15,538.37

TAILOR SHOP BIENNIAL REPORT

SHOWING CLOTHING MANUFACTURED AND REPAIRED, AND ALSO AMOUNT SAVED BY CONVICTS' LABOR FROM OCTOBER 1ST, 1910 TO SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1912.
REPAIRED.

REPAIRED FOR		Cost of Goods	Cost of Labor	Value per Garment	Total Value of Goods	Total Value of Labor	Total Value of Garments	Total Repaired	Saving on Convict Labor
Guards									
1217	Coats @	.....	\$ .25	.....	.....	\$ 303.25	.....	
1522	Pants @	.....	.25	.....	.....	380.50	.....	
479	Vests @	.....	.25	.....	.....	119.75	.....	
115	Caps @	.....	.25	.....	.....	28.75	.....	
11	Ties @	.....	.05	.....	.....	.55	.....	\$ 832.80	\$ 832.80
Discharged Convict									
401	Coats @	.....	\$ .25	.....	.....	\$ 100.25	.....	
296	Pants @	.....	.25	.....	.....	74.00	.....	
239	Vests @	.....	.25	.....	.....	59.75	.....	
536	Hats @	.....	.25	.....	.....	134.00	.....	
96	Ties @	.....	.05	.....	.....	4.80	.....	372.80	372.80
Miscellaneous									
1	Ladies' Coat @	.....	\$ .25	.....	.....	\$ .25	.....	
5	Ladies' Skirts @	.....	.25	.....	.....	1.25	.....	
161	Bed Ticks @	.10	.15	.25	16.10	24.15	40.25		
97	Blue Wool Shirts @	.....	.05	.....	.....	4.85	.....	30.50	30.50
Thread, Needles, etc.		.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.20	
Material for Guards		.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10.35	
Material for Convicts		.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	9.80	
Material for Miscellaneous		.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	16.10	
Total repaired and also saving on convict labor								\$ 1,272.55	\$ 1,236.10

TAILOR SHOP BIENNIAL REPORT

SHOWING CLOTHING MANUFACTURED AND REPAIRED, AND ALSO AMOUNT SAVED BY CONVICTS' LABOR FROM OCTOBER 1st, 1910 TO SEPTEMBER 30th, 1912
 RECAPITULATION.

MANUFACTURED AND REPAIRED FOR						
MANUFACTURED						
	Table	Total Value of Goods	Total Value of Labor	Total Value of Garments	Saving on Convict Labor	
Western Hospital (Inmates' Clothing)	1	\$ 6,706.50	\$ 5,935.00	\$ 12,641.50	\$	5,935.00
Eastern Hospital (Inmates' Clothing)	1	2,863.85	2,515.50	5,379.35		2,515.50
Eastern Hospital (Employees' Clothing)	1	162.00	162.00	324.00		162.00
State Soldiers' Home (Inmates' Clothing)	1	1,304.50	791.00	2,095.50		791.00
Discharged Convicts' Clothing	2	2,633.55	2,318.50	4,952.05		2,318.50
Guards' Uniforms, W. S. P.	2	705.00	356.50	1,061.50		356.50
Convicts' Regulation Clothing	3	11,153.15	3,143.38	14,296.53		3,143.38
Miscellaneous, W. S. P.	4	978.88	316.49	1,295.37		316.49
Totals of amount manufactured and also saving						
		\$ 26,507.43	\$ 15,538.37	\$ 42,045.80	\$	15,538.37
REPAIRED						
For Guards, W. S. P. (Clothing)	5	.....	\$ 832.80	.....	\$	832.80
For Discharged Convicts' Clothing	5	.....	372.80	.....		372.80
For Miscellaneous	5	.....	30.50	.....		30.50
Material used for above repairing	5	36.45	.....	.....		.....
Grand totals of manufactured and repaired, etc.						
		\$ 26,543.88	\$ 16,774.47	\$ 42,045.80	\$	16,774.47

In addition to the tailoring department, several other departments are carried on in which articles are made for the various institutions. In the carpentering department, desks, tables, chairs, sideboards, and buffets are made for use in the various institutions. The tin shop furnishes its quota of articles for use in other institutions also.

We believe, of the three systems, that the State Account System provides the most satisfactory solution of the prison labor problem, because it comes more nearly within the requirements of the successful prison labor system.

First, prison labor should be productive; second, there should be no private interest in the products of prison labor; third, it should be remunerative and make the institution self-supporting instead of a heavy burden upon the taxpayers of this state, and the industries that are established should be selected with a view to making such industries, as can and will, make the institution self-supporting, that will also give mechanical employment to the inmate and will best fit him to earn an honest living when released from prison; fourth, the prisoner should share in his earning power, which provides an opportunity for the industrious inmate.

One or two industries could be selected which would furnish employment for all the inmates except those working in the kitchen and other departments about the prison. The products should be such as are used by a large portion of the population, in order that the benefits may be as widely and equitably distributed as possible. The State Account System, according to Warden Wolfer, has been very successful in Minnesota, where a binder twine plant has been in operation for nearly twenty years. They also have a farm machinery plant in operation. Binding twine was first manufactured in Stillwater in 1891. The output for the first season was three hundred thousand pounds. The present capacity of the plant is eighteen million pounds per year, and the total amount of twine manufactured since the beginning of the plant, up to and including the present season, is one hundred sixty-nine million, three hundred seventy-three thousand pounds. The report made by the United States Commission of Labor, treating on convict labor of the various states, placed the saving to Minnesota farmers at three cents per pound on binder twine. If correct, it means that on the total amount so far manufactured in the Minnesota State Prison, there has been a saving to the con-

sumer of five million, eighty-one thousand, one hundred ninety dollars, but to this should be added the profits to the state of one million, six hundred twenty thousand, nine hundred fifty-four dollars and forty-two cents, making a grand total gain to the farmers and to the state of six million, seven hundred two thousand, one hundred forty-four dollars and forty-two cents. In addition to the twine plant, Minnesota has a large farm machinery manufacturing plant, but the twine plant alone in Minnesota shows an annual profit varying from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand dollars.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

We believe that employment of prisoners should be directed entirely by the state.

We believe that the first consideration should be the training of the prisoner and after that the financial results.

We believe that all the work carried on in the prison should be so distributed that employment can be provided for all the population of the institution, and the production resulting therefrom of sufficient variety so that no unequal burden may come on any individual industry.

We would recommend that the state quarry be operated by prison labor.

We recommend that sufficient land be acquired by purchase or otherwise to provide employment for such prisoners as can be employed at farm labor, as the farm method of handling prisoners is splendid economy and will save the state making an appropriation for additional cells at the penitentiary. Any young first-offender could be immediately transferred to the farm, thereby saving them from coming in contact with hardened criminals. A small appropriation for necessary buildings on this land would be necessary. The stone could be cut at the penitentiary and shipped ready for being placed in a building. This farm could eventually be used as a reformatory.

We recommend that an appropriation be made sufficient to complete the building at the penitentiary, which when completed will furnish room for the employment of all prisoners who are not employed at labor on the farm, quarry, or in the stone shed.

JOHN W. SNOOK.
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